(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) A Letter of Complaint dated 11.01.2003 received from the Government of Punjab requested for the constitution of a Water Dispute Tribunal regarding water disputes appearing to have arisen, *inter alia*, with the Government of Haryana and Rajasthan. One of the specific matters in dispute cited therein for adjudication and decision by the Tribunal was whether the allocation of surplus water by the agreements related to Ravi Beas waters required reconsideration under certain changed circumstances, including reduction in the available water. The agreement in question were later terminated by Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004 enacted by the State on 12.07.2004 and a Presidential Reference in the matter of the Act is before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India for consideration and report.

Also, during the 25th Meeting of the Northern Zonal Council held on 25th October, 2005 in Shimla, Chief Minister, Punjab is reported to have suggested that the entire issue of water sharing should be considered in totality with due regard to the changed hydrological, ecological and sociological factors by a fresh Tribunal.

Fall in ground water level in Punjab

731. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that level of ground water has gone very low in Punjab and farmers find it difficult to get water for irrigation purposes;

(b) the details from where the Central Government have received reports in this regard; and

(c) the nature of assistance provided by Centre to the State to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A long-term analysis of ground water levels by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), under the Ministry of Water Resources, during the years

1995-2004 and recent assessment of ground water resources carried out jointly by the CGWB, NABARD and the State Government have indicated significant decline (more than 20 cm. per year) in ground water levels in some parts of 16 districts of the State of Punjab viz. Amritsar, Bhatinda, Faridkot, Fatehgarhsahib, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Mansa, Moga, Nawanshahar, Patiala, Ropar and Sangrur, which has caused hardship to farmers.

(c) "Water" being a State subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Governments to formulate plans for augmenting water resources. The CGWB has, however, provided technical assistance to the State of Punjab to implement various schemes for augmentation of water resources. It has also implemented a Central Sector Scheme for Study of Recharge to Ground Water in the country during the VIII & Five Year Plans. Under this scheme, a total of 17 demonstrative projects on rain water harvesting and artificial recharge to ground water were taken up in Punjab, for which a fund of Rs. 361.92 lakh alongwith technical assistance was provided to the implementing Agencies of the State Government of Punjab.

Setting up of Central Water Management Body

732. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning a new Central Water Management Body to oversee water usage and entitlement, besides overseeing projects, treaties and disputes over water;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the status of the proposal; and

(c) whether this proposal is in response to a recent World Bank report citing demand for water in India to far exceed supplies by 2020?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Setting up of Water Regulatory Authority in Maharashtra

733. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government have approved a proposal for setting up a Water Regulatory Authority for water management in Maharashtra; and